



Department of Homeland Security Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 16 December 2003

Current Nationwide
Threat Level is



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www.whitehouse.gov/homeland

Daily Overview

- Reuters reports a government transportation watchdog group has warned of increasing congestion on the nation's rail networks, saying some routes cannot safely support growing passenger and freight demand. (See item [7](#))
- The Food and Drug Administration reports New York Agriculture Commissioner Nathan L. Rudgers has warned consumers not to eat "Peregrina Cheese, Queso Fresco, Fresh Cheese," due to Listeria contamination. (See item [10](#))
- eSecurity Planet reports IBM and Microsoft have released fixes for a potentially serious vulnerability that could be exploited to trigger denial-of-service attacks. (See item [19](#))

DHS/IAIP Update *Fast Jump*

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Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: Physical: Elevated, Cyber: Elevated

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://esisac.com>]

1. *December 12, Las Vegas Review Journal* — Nuclear waste repository may conflict with Nellis. The Senate military readiness subcommittee is planning a hearing in Las Vegas, NV, next month to explore whether the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository could hamper Nellis Air Force Base training, according to Jack Finn, spokesperson for Senator John Ensign, the subcommittee chairman. Finn said the panel "will gauge the impact on the proposed (nuclear waste) transportation routes on our military. We

want to make sure that no projects will interfere with their mission readiness and support." **The hearing probably will expand beyond Nevada to examine what impact the Yucca Mountain Project might have on military installations in other states along nuclear waste shipping corridors, Finn said.** The session would allow Air Force officials to expand on concerns they expressed to members of Congress this fall about the nuclear waste repository being planned 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas. At the urging of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Department of Energy (DOE) is continuing to study potential threats to the Yucca repository from aircraft crashes. The issue is among 200 items DOE is trying to address before it files a repository application with the NRC late next year.

Source: http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2003/Dec-12-Fri-2003/news/22784572.html

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Chemical Sector

2. *December 15, The Opelousas Daily World* — **Chemical spill closes Louisiana highway. Louisiana state road Route 13 was to remain closed through midnight Sunday due to a hazardous chemical spill at the Williams Transco Pipeline Station No. 50 near Eunice.** Williams' Southwest Public Relations Manager Chris Stockton said the spill of an estimated 490 barrels of natural gas condensate occurred about 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 14. He said no injuries have been reported and no evacuations ordered. He said Williams' personnel are working closely with state police, local fire fighters, industry Hazmat teams and the Department of Environmental Quality to contain the spill. As of late Sunday he said the spill was contained in a ditch beside the plant that workers had diked off to prevent runoff. "There are vacuum trucks on the scene to collect the condensate. There are side booms to help prevent it from spreading," Stockton said. **Gas condensates, a mix of various liquid hydrocarbons, are listed as a toxic substance by the federal government.**

Source: <http://www.dailyworld.com/html/B056A897-E057-4735-9D92-BFAB9516FE8D.shtml>

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

3. *December 12, Govexec.com* — **New system could help avoid increase in troops says Rumsfeld. A new Department of Defense personnel management system could help the Pentagon avoid an increase in the size of the military, which some lawmakers want but Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld opposes.** Addressing a conference on Friday, December 12, Rumsfeld was asked whether the U.S. military is large enough to handle its global commitments. Earlier this week, more than two dozen House Democrats introduced legislation that would increase Army troop levels from 482,400 to 522,400, the Air Force from 359,300 to 388,000, and the Marine Corps from 175,000 to 190,000. **Rumsfeld said senior Pentagon leaders are studying whether the military has enough active-duty soldiers, or "end strength," but have not come to any conclusions.** "They're doing analysis now and to the extent we need more end strength, needless to say we'd ask for it and the Congress would

give it," he said. But Rumsfeld added that a new personnel management system recently approved by Congress will give the Pentagon flexibility in using its civilian workforce to perform jobs that are currently done by uniformed soldiers.

Source: <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/1203/121203c1.htm>

4. *December 12, Associated Press* — **Britain eyes networked defense. Britain has announced a major restructuring of its armed forces, with plans to make them lighter, quicker and more technologically advanced to wage war on terrorism. British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon said Britain must modernize its forces so they can continue to fight side by side with the United States in the war on terror.** Presenting the government's plans in a strategy paper, Hoon said that over time the military would cut the number of heavy weapons such as tanks and artillery, downgrade one of its three armored brigades and keep under review the number of combat aircraft it deploys. But he said the armed forces would become more hi-tech and capable of deploying quickly around the world for combat, peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. The government gave no indication whether the restructuring would affect overall troop numbers. **Hoon said a major area of investment would be technology to ensure tanks, ships and aircraft in the battle zone were linked by computer.** So-called "network enabled capabilities" would allow information gatherers, commanders and troops to work together with "unparalleled speed and accuracy."

Source: <http://australianit.news.com.au/articles/0.7204.8140941%5E15407%5E%5Enbv%5E15306-15322.00.html>

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Banking and Finance Sector

Nothing to report.

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Transportation Sector

5. *December 15, Associated Press* — **Man who inspected plant was on federal business.** A man who recently inspected a chemical plant in Chattanooga, TN, was a federal officer doing routine work and not an impostor. The Tennessee Office of Homeland Security had been investigating the man's visit to the Chattanooga BASF plant in November because local officials were not notified he was coming as is standard practice. **The investigation confirmed the man was an officer with Federal Protective Services who was gathering information related to transportation safety.** Plant officials had said that a man identifying himself as a federal inspector called to ask about some tanker rail cars at the plant.

Source: <http://www.wate.com/Global/story.asp?S=1564419>

6. *December 15, Department of Homeland Security: U.S. Coast Guard* — **Coast Guard reminds maritime community of approaching security deadline.** The U.S. Coast Guard is reminding members of the maritime community that security plans for vessels and facilities affected by the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) of 2002 are due to the Coast Guard by the end of this month, and warns that it may impose civil penalties for not complying with the

requirement. **The Coast Guard estimates that 10,000 U.S. flag vessels, 5,000 facilities and 50 outer continental shelf facilities are required to submit security plans by December 31, as detailed in rules published on July 1.** Starting January 1, 2004, the Coast Guard will begin enforcing the security plan submission requirement. Failure to submit a plan is a violation of the MTSA rules and may result in a civil penalty of up to \$25,000 per violation against the owner or operator of the vessel or facility.

Source: <http://www.piersystem.com/external/index.cfm?cid=21&fuseaction=EXTERNAL.docview&pressID=26715>

7. *December 15, Reuters* — **Concerns about growing rail traffic.** A government transportation watchdog group warned on Monday of increasing congestion on the nation's rail networks, saying some routes cannot safely support growing passenger and freight demand. **Rail traffic has increased 64 percent since 1980 with strong growth forecast through 2020, according to a freight and passenger industry audit by Kenneth Mead, the Transportation Department inspector general.** More traffic combined with a steady decline in track miles and continued reductions in railroad staff to save money aggravates already crowded conditions, industry officials said. **The audit found that numerous infrastructure bottlenecks are magnifying the problem. They include undersized bridges and tunnels, track design limits, and outmoded communications systems. While Mead did not say which routes were less able to handle their loads, a government–industry analysis in 2002 showed the mid–Atlantic region was facing a capacity crisis.** Amtrak, the nation's only city–to–city passenger rail service, plans to spend more than \$460 million on capital projects during the current fiscal year, which runs through September 30. Priorities include bridge and tunnel upgrades on its Northeast Corridor system between Washington and Boston.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=domesticNews&storyID=3996548>

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Postal and Shipping Sector

Nothing to report.

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Agriculture Sector

8. *December 15, Cardiff University* — **Pest control breakthrough. DNA found in a spider's stomach could herald a breakthrough in the fight against farm pests, which cause millions of dollars of damage to crops.** Cardiff University, UK, scientists, led by Bill Symondson, have become the first to use DNA–based techniques to analyze the content of spiders' guts to identify the prey they have eaten in the field. Money spiders are a vital controller of pest numbers on farms because their prey includes aphids. However, aphids have poor nutritional value and are sometimes toxic, so the spiders need to balance their diet with other prey. In a field experiment, the Cardiff team's analysis showed that the money spiders were eating large numbers of small insects called springtails. "The DNA analysis enables us to identify precisely what the spiders have eaten," said Symondson. **"If we compare that with the prey populations in the field, we can see which prey the spiders prefer to eat when they have a**

choice. If we can encourage this prey insect in greater numbers, it should boost the population of spiders and therefore provide better control of aphids," he said. The team is also using the techniques they have developed to analyze other important predators, such as the ground beetle, whose prey include slugs the most damaging of crop pests in Europe.

Source: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2003/12/031215072924.htm>

9. *December 15, IRIN News* — **Uzbek foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. Uzbekistan's southern and eastern provinces have suffered an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease with farmers and agricultural workers at a loss as to how to fight or take proper precautions against it.** Uzbek law prohibits publishing or broadcasting information on livestock diseases. But concealing the extent of foot-and-mouth disease could be counterproductive. When foot-and-mouth disease caused enormous losses in European countries in 2001, Uzbekistan officially declared itself free of the disease, and that it had last been detected in 1990. However, local people say foot-and-mouth disease has always been endemic in the southern provinces. **Local people noticed that the provincial sanitary-epidemiological center, veterinarians, customs services, and police were then put on the alert to prevent the spread of the disease in the province, which it was believed to have entered from neighbouring Tajikistan and Afghanistan.** Although local authorities enhanced security on the border, they failed to acknowledge the fact that the disease was already spreading quickly within the province. This refusal to acknowledge the problem is preventing people from combating the disease and stopping its spread.

Source: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=38426&SelectRegion=Central Asia&SelectCountry=UZBEKISTAN>

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Food Sector

10. *December 12, Food and Drug Administration* — **Cheese recalled. New York Agriculture Commissioner Nathan L. Rudgers Friday warned consumers not to eat "Peregrina Cheese, Queso Fresco, Fresh Cheese," made by Peregrina Cheese Corp., in Brooklyn, NY, due to Listeria contamination.** The contaminated cheese was discovered through routine sampling and testing by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. **No illnesses have been reported to date.** Listeria is a common organism found in nature. It can cause serious complications for pregnant women, such as stillbirth. Other problems can manifest in people with compromised immune systems. Listeria can also cause serious flu-like symptoms in healthy individuals.

Source: http://www.fda.gov/oc/po/firmrecalls/peregrina12_03.html

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Water Sector

Nothing to report.

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Public Health Sector

11. *December 15, Agence France Presse* — **Scientists closer to ebola treatment.** Preliminary findings of an animal study suggest that scientists have taken an important step towards a possible treatment strategy for the ebola virus. Hemorrhagic fever from the ebola virus is fatal in up to 80 percent of cases in humans, according to the report. The virus is thought to cause excessive blood coagulation and thrombosis leading to organ dysfunction. **Inhibition of the blood coagulation pathway could therefore be a potential therapeutic approach for ebola treatment.** Thomas W. Geisbert from the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases and colleagues injected rhesus macaques with the ebola virus to induce the deadly fever. Nine of the macaques received an inhibitor of the blood coagulation pathway, while other macaques received the ebola virus only. Treatment with the inhibitor resulted in a 33 percent survival rate; this contrasted with the fate of the 17 macaques in the control group, all of whom died. **"Our results have great clinical implications, since our treatment approach of ebola hemorrhagic fever targets the disease process rather than replication of the infectious agent,"** said Geisbert.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s1010256.htm>

12. *December 15, icNorthernIreland* — **Hospital superbug is carried by pets.** The hospital superbug methicillin-resistant staph aureus (MRSA) is now being carried by pets in Great Britain. **MRSA was discovered in a dozen animals from across the UK, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) confirmed.** The development could make it harder to limit the spread of MRSA. Veterinarians urged owners not to abandon their pets following the discovery. **Cats, dogs, and rabbits were found to be infected.** "We don't know yet whether animals have acquired infection from humans or vice versa," said HPA spokesperson Angela Kearns. The infections were picked up by the British Veterinary Association.

Source: http://icnorthernireland.icnetwork.co.uk/news/local/content/objectid=13725212_method=full_siteid=91603_headline=-Hospital-Superbug-Is-Carried-By-Pets-name_page.html

13. *December 15, University of Toronto* — **New SARS virus research.** Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is formed by a combination of mammalian and avian viruses, says a new study from the University of Toronto. **By tracing its evolution, researchers theorize that SARS is likely the result of a rare recombination of viruses from both mammalian and avian hosts. This forms an entirely new virus unrecognizable to human immune systems.** Understanding the evolution of SARS is a crucial step towards managing future viral outbreaks, according to the study's co-author David Guttman. Identifying the specific evolutionary changes that enables this virus to spread into the human population should improve our understanding of why this particular virus is so virulent. **"This will allow us to design more effective treatments and respond more effectively to future outbreaks,"** says Guttman. In their study, Guttman and PhD student John Stavrinos deconstructed and compared the SARS virus genome to related coronaviruses using phylogenetic computational tools. They found that the protein encoded on the genome's left side was of mammalian origin, while the proteins on the right were of avian origin. The middle gene encodes a protein that is a mix of mammalian and avian viruses.

Source: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2003/12/031215072717.htm>

14. *December 15, Associated Press* — **Flu shot unable to combat virus strain.** Late last winter, a committee of vaccine experts designing this season's flu shot considered their choices. They had to decide whether they would stick with last year's formula, even though a new strain of the bug was ominously building strength; or if they should try to make a new vaccine and risk complications or delays that could result in a shortage or maybe even no vaccine at all. The committee voted to bring back last year's vaccine formula, even though they feared they were telling Americans to receive shots that might not work very well. The new strain of flu became the dominant variety, accounting for three-quarters of all cases as the disease got an unusually early start this fall. **About 83 million doses of vaccine were made, but no one really knows how much protection from illness it gives. It almost certainly will not be the usual 70 percent to 90 percent, and some experts fear it is below 50 percent.** The Food and Drug Administration, with the help of its expert committee, must decide in late winter what varieties will be the biggest threats. "By the time you know what's the right strain, you can't do anything about it," said Michael Decker, head of scientific affairs at Aventis, one of the three U.S. vaccine makers.

Source: <http://www.bayarea.com/mld/cctimes/7492158.htm>

15. *December 12, Federal Computer Week* — **HHS gives \$5.4 million to Mexico.** The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released \$5.4 million Friday to the Mexican government to enhance biological incident early warning systems with the four U.S. states that share the border with the country. The money is to be used for a variety of areas, including disease detection and reporting and information technology, HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson announced at the annual meeting of the U.S.–Mexico Border Health Commission. Six Mexican and four U.S. states make up the commission, which will distribute the money jointly with HHS and Mexico's Secretariat of Health. The enhancements will be put in place over a three-year period, and will be used to address both potential bioterrorism and naturally occurring infectious diseases. Education and training are also priority areas for funding.

Source: <http://www.fcw.com/geb/articles/2003/1208/geb-mexico-12-12-03.asp>

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Government Sector

Nothing to report.

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Emergency Services Sector

16. *December 15, Firehouse.com* — **Florida county seeks to prevent crashes involving emergency vehicles.** Martin County Fire Rescue plans to turn off the lights and sirens and slow support crews responding to some calls, in a new effort to prevent crashes involving emergency vehicles. First-response teams with lights and sirens would still arrive in the same amount of time to critical crashes, fires and other emergencies, but vehicles coming to assist them would obey traffic laws, even waiting for signals to turn green under the plan scheduled to start January 1. Although there have not been any major crashes involving county ambulances

or fire trucks in recent memory, fire officials said they wanted to follow the safety policy popular across the country. **"The majority of firefighter deaths in the U.S. are from traffic accidents,"** said Fire Rescue Chief Tom Billington. "That's why now's the time to do it. A lot of organizations wait for a tragedy. We're not going to do that." Support crews might now arrive a few minutes later, but emergency personnel try to get advanced life support on a scene in six minutes and fire crews in eight minutes anywhere in the county, though the average varies, the chief said.

Source: <http://www6.lexisnexis.com/wpublisher/EndUser?Action=UserDisplayFullDocument&orgId=34&topicId=17906&docId=1:65675709&start=1>

17. *December 15, The Dispatch (Gilroy, CA)* — **Red light for traffic signal jammers.** Drivers willing to pay \$300 to keep traffic lights green could — in a worst-case scenario — cost Gilroy, CA, \$220,000 to keep intersections free of traffic jams. Traffic Engineer Kristi Abrams says it could cost the city \$5,000 an intersection to safeguard signals against so-called traffic light pre-emption devices. **These devices — which are designed for emergency vehicles — shine a strobe light on the optical sensors set atop traffic signals, causing lights to jam.** There are 44 intersections within city limits that use optical sensors to keep stoplights green for emergency vehicles attempting to pass through without delay. Currently, any strobe light can trigger a signal jam. The \$300 devices, which are becoming more commonplace, are marketed through many different avenues. **Dealers are instructed to sell only to "authorized users" such as volunteer first responders, doctors and security personnel, but it's easy to get the device nonetheless. Complicating matters is that some motorists may not even know they are one of the offenders.** When Abrams was trying to ascertain the cause of a left-turn signal at Tenth and Chestnut streets that wouldn't switch from red to green, she noticed the light jam after a large yellow bus passed through the intersection with a strobe light on.

Source: <http://gilroydispatch.com/news/newsview.asp?c=86753>

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Information and Telecommunications Sector

18. *December 15, Government Technology* — **NSF announces \$30 million program. To promote research into more dependable, accountable and secure computer and network systems, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has issued a solicitation for the Cyber Trust program, which expects to fund up to \$30 million in awards.** The Cyber Trust program will support up to three research center-level efforts as well as single-investigator and team awards, subject to NSF's merit-review process and the availability of funds. **The Cyber Trust program is seeking innovative proposals in three broad areas: fundamental research, multi-disciplinary research, and education and workforce development.** Fundamental research is needed to advance the state of the art in knowledge and technology about trustworthy computing. This covers such areas as security and privacy models and metrics, evaluation and certification methods, denial-of-service prevention, long-lived data archiving methods, privacy protection, and network and application forensics. Multi-disciplinary research is needed to improve understanding of the social, legal, ethical and economic trade-offs that affect the design and operation of trusted information systems. Additional information is available online: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04524/nsf04524.htm>
Source: <http://www.govtech.net/news/news.php?id=81023>

19. *December 15, eSecurity Planet* — **DoS Flaw in SOAP DTD Parameter.** IBM and Microsoft have released fixes for a potentially serious vulnerability that could be exploited to trigger denial-of-service attacks. The companies said the vulnerability was caused by an error in the XML parser when parsing the DTD (Document Type Definition) part of XML documents. Affected software include the IBM WebSphere 5.0.0 and Microsoft ASP.NET Web Services (.NET framework 1.0, .NET framework 1.1). According to IBM, the security patch fixes a flaw that could be exploited by sending a specially crafted SOAP request. "This can cause the WebSphere XML Parser to consume an excessive amount of CPU resources," the company warned. IBM's security patch is available here:

<http://www-1.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?rs=180&context=SSEQ>

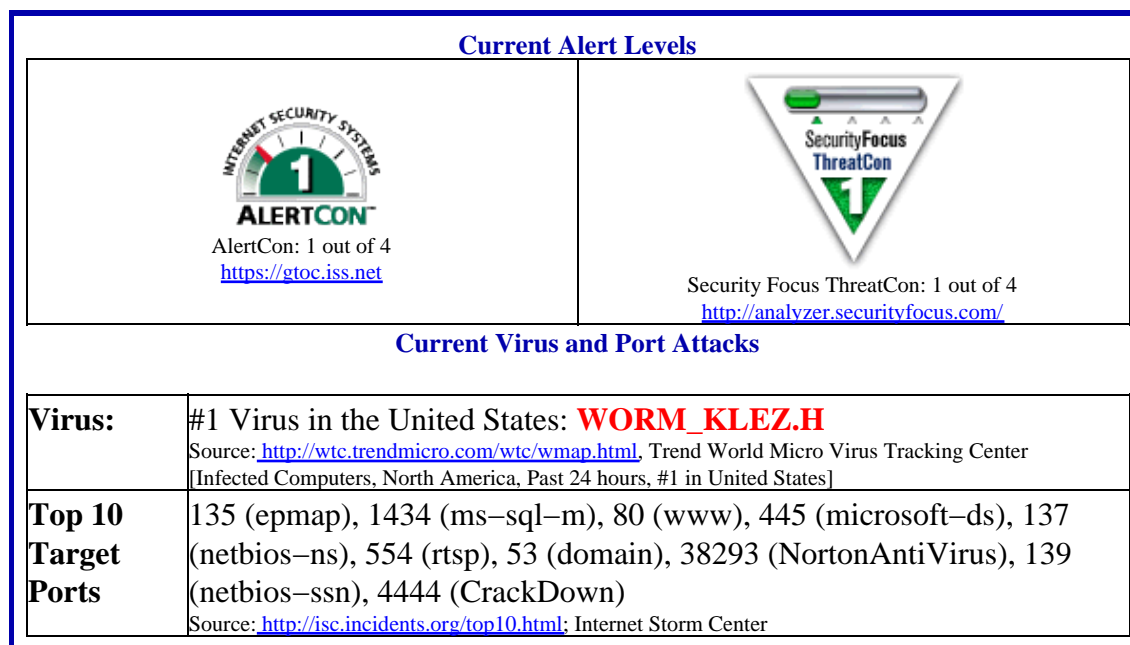
<TP&q=PO709%2021&uid=swg24005582>.

Microsoft confirmed the DTD error parsing vulnerability. In some cases, Microsoft recommended the rejection of XML messages that contain DTS, because of its limitations. The company said the SOAP 1.1 specification states that a SOAP message must not contain a DTD. Microsoft's security patch is available here:

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?kbid=826231>.

Source: <http://www.esecurityplanet.com/trends/article.php/3289191>

Internet Alert Dashboard



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General Sector

20. *December 15, Washington Post* — **Pakistani leader escapes attempt on life.** Pakistan's president, General Pervez Musharraf, narrowly escaped an attempt on his life Sunday when a powerful bomb ripped up a section of a bridge in the city of Rawalpindi seconds after his motorcade crossed it, officials said. A senior army official called the explosion the "closest call yet" in at least three attempts to assassinate the president since he began

cooperating with the U.S. in the war against terrorism. "This was a cowardly act by the extremist religious forces," Musharraf said. A military official said that "the intensity of the blast was enough to blow up the entire convoy." No one was hurt in the incident. **In recent days, to rid Pakistan of religious extremism, Musharraf has banned key Islamic militant groups and ordered the arrests of their leaders. And, for the first time, police detained a dozen Islamic militants Saturday for soliciting funds for jihad, or holy war.** Senior Pakistani intelligence officials have said al Qaeda and Pakistani militant Islamic groups that pledge their allegiance to bin Laden pose the greatest threat to Musharraf. In two audiotaped messages recently aired on al-Jazeera, Ayman Zawahiri, bin Laden's deputy, dubbed Musharraf a traitor and called on his Pakistani followers to topple his government.

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A101-2003Dec14.html>

- 21. *December 15, Washington Post* — Gunmen seize hostages at hospital in Russia. A small band of Chechen rebels mounted an incursion into a neighboring republic overnight, taking hostages and killing nine Russian border guards, Russian authorities said Monday.** About 25 to 30 guerrillas moved into the province of Dagestan about 3 a.m. Monday and made their way to the tiny village of Shauri in a remote part of southern Russia just 10 miles from the border with Georgia, authorities said. They briefly took over a local hospital, then left with four hostages along with a stolen jeep-style vehicle. The rebels set a trap for nearby Russian border guards, who had been tipped off to the incursion by a local resident, authorities said. The Chechens lured the guards away from their border post at Mokok, then ambushed them, killing nine of the Russians, according to the Dagestani interior ministry. The Russians said the guerrillas may now be fleeing toward Georgia or Chechnya. **A series of suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks blamed on Chechens have left 470 people dead in Moscow, Chechnya, and elsewhere in southern Russia over the last 14 months.**

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A747-2003Dec15.html>

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DHS/IAIP Products & Contact Information

The Department of Homeland Security's Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection (IAIP) serves as a national critical infrastructure threat assessment, warning, vulnerability entity. The IAIP provides a range of bulletins and advisories of interest to information system security and professionals and those involved in protecting public and private infrastructures. By visiting the IAIP web-site (<http://www.nipcc.gov>), one can quickly access any of the following DHS/IAIP products:

[DHS/IAIP Warnings](#) – DHS/IAIP Assessments, Advisories, and Alerts: DHS/IAIP produces three levels of infrastructure warnings. Collectively, these threat warning products will be based on material that is significant, credible, timely, and that address cyber and/or infrastructure dimensions with possibly significant impact.

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